

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-11 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-05

AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 COME-00 DODE-00 FPC-01

H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04

USIA-06 SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 AS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3843

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 1829

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG, IN

SUBJECT: CIEC: CONVERSATION WITH INDIAN DELEGATE TO ENERGY
COMMISSION

REF: NEW DELHI 1354

1. EMBOFFS CALLED ON A.S. MEHTA, GOI REPRESENTATIVE ON THE
ENERGY COMMISSION AND CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF PETROLEUM SUPPLIES
IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM, IN ORDER TO HOLD PRELIMINARY
EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON COMMISSION'S WORK AND OBTAIN INFORMATION
ON IMPORT PROSPECTS FOR 1976 (LATTER REPORTED SEPTEL).

2. MEHTA GAVE EMBOFFS WARM, ALMOST EFFUSIVE, WELCOME. HE SAID
HE APPRECIATED THEIR INITIATIVE IN SEEKING MEETING TO DIS-
CUSS CIEC WORK, AND REPEATED THIS POINT FOR EMPHASIS LATER IN
CONVERSATION. HE HAD MENTIONED THE APPOINTMENT TO B.K. SANYAL,
THE SECRETARY (ECONOMIC AFFAIRS) IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS, IN A RECENT MEETING. SANYAL HAD TOLD HIM, MEHTA
REPORTED, TO TELL THE EMBASSY REPS THAT INDIA SOUGHT TO COOPERATE
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CLOSELY WITH THE UNITED STATES TO MAKE THE WORK OF THE COM-

MISSION PRODUCTIVE.

3. DRAWING ON STATE 9962, EMBOFF DESCRIBED ROLE US SAW FOR ENERGY COMMISSION AND AREAS IN WHICH ITS EFFORTS COULD EFFECTIVELY FOCUS. MEHTA'S ONLY SPECIFIC COMMENT WAS TO NOTE THAT TRANSFER OF ENERGY TECHNOLOGY WAS NOT EASILY ACCOMPLISHED BECAUSE IT WAS LARGELY COMMERCIAL PROPERTY OF PRIVATE COMPANIES (HE WAS CLEARLY SPEAKING FROM A PETROLEUM POINT OF VIEW, AND REFERRED AS AN EXAMPLE TO LUBRICANT ADDITIVES). HE CONCLUDED THE DISCUSSION BY COMMENTING THAT US VIEWS WERE SUBSTANTIALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THOSE OF OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS -- A JUDGMENT MADE MORE INTERESTING BY FACT THAT, AS A MEMBER OF INDIAN DELEGATION TO PREPCON I AND II, MEHTA HAS BEEN FULLY EXPOSED TO OTHER G-19 POSITIONS. EMBOFF REFERRED IN PASSING TO ISSUE OF CRUDE OIL PRICES, BUT MEHTA DID NOT TAKE UP THE SUBJECT. (AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE -- 75 DELHI 13224 -- GOI PUBLICLY OPPOSED AND CRITICIZED LATEST OPEC PRICE RISE.)

4. MEHTA INFORMED EMBOFFS THAT HE WAS BEING DETAILED TO PARIS FOR THE DURATION OF HIS MEMBERSHIP ON THE COMMISSION. HE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE FOR A GOI POLICY LEVEL OFFICIAL TO BE AWAY FROM HIS OFFICE FOR A WEEK OR MORE EVERY MONTH. HE ALSO EXPECTED THAT WORK OF THE DELEGATIONS IN PARIS WOULD BE FAIRLY CONTINUOUS, WHETHER COMMISSIONS FORMALLY IN SESSION OR NOT. HE AFFIRMED THAT HE AND OTHER INDIAN REPS WHO WERE COMMISSION MEMBERS (THUS EXCLUDING INDIAN OBSERVER ON RAW MATERIALS COMMISSION) WOULD OPERATE WITH LARGE PERSONAL AUTHORITY UNDER LOOSE POLICY GUIDANCE FROM NEW DELHI.

5. MEHTA EXHIBITED A PLEASANT, OPEN MANNER WHICH SHOULD MAKE HIM A HELPFUL CONTACT FOR THE U.S. DELEGATION. HIS PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND IN THE GOVERNMENT CIVIL SERVICE IS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY IN PETROLEUM AFFAIRS. HE RECALLED, WITH LAUGHTER, THAT WHEN HE FIRST CAME TO WORK IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM IN 1971, THE MINISTRY WAS CALLED ON TO ANSWER A QUERY IN PARLIAMENT ABOUT A RECENT "DRASTIC" RISE IN THE PRICE OF IMPORTED CRUDE OIL: FROM \$1.25 TO \$1.36.

6. COMMENT: WE FIND THAT K. G. VAIDYA, ECONOMIC ADVISOR IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, WILL ALSO BE GOING TO THE COMMISSION'S CONFIDENTIAL

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OPENING SESSIONS. THIS ADDS TO OUR IMPRESSION OF AN INDIAN DELEGATION WHOSE MEMBERS ARE PERSONALLY FRIENDLY TOWARDS THE UNITED STATES AND WHO WILL TAKE A PRAGMATIC AND COOPERATIVE APPROACH.
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